NCA

VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0344 MARCH 11, 1976
TURNBULL/KANSAS CITY

AMERICAN AGRICULTURE: THE MAN AND HIS LAND

ANNCR:

IN KANSAS CITY, SEVERAL AMERICAN FARM FAMILIES WERE HONORED THIS WEEK FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. VOA AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST ROD TURNBULL WAS THERE AND HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID AROUND THE WORLD ABOUT THE LARGE FARMS IN THE UNITED STATES. MUCH ALSO HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT AMERICA'S LARGE FARM PRODUCTION, AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT ITS ABILITY TO EXPORT GREAT QUANTITIES OF GRAIN. IN FACT, AMERICAN GRAIN EXPORTS THIS YEAR WILL ACCOUNT FOR MORE THAN HALF OF ALL THE GRAIN THAT MOVES IN WORLD TRADE.

WHAT ISN'T ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD, EVEN THE HE UNITED STATES IS THAT MOST AMERICAN FARMS ARE FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED. THIS MEANS THE WHOLE FAMILY WORKS, EVEN THE WIFE, AND IN MANY CASES, THE WIFE OR THE MOTHER HELP IN THE FIELDS BY DRIVING TRUCKS OR TRACTORS.

IN KANSAS CITY THIS WEEK, SEVERAL FAMILIES FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI WERE HONORED AT A DINNER FOR THE EFFICIENT WAY IN WHICH THEY FARM THEIR LAND. THEY ARE NOT THE BIGGEST FARMERS IN THE STATE, NOR THE MOST WEALTHY. BUT THEY ARE DOING GOOD JOBS.

ONE OF THE COUPLES HONORED WAS MISTER AND MISSUS JEAN DEAL, WHOSE FARM IS NOT FAR TO THE NORTH OF KANSAS CITY. THE DEAL'S CHILDREN ARE GROWN AND LIVE AWAY FROM

HOME. SO THEY MUST FARM THEIR TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY HECTATES OF LAND ALONE.

MISTER DEAL BEGAN FARMING AS A YOUNG MAN, THEN ENROLLED AT MISSOURI UNIVERSITY. HE HAD TO QUIT THE UNIVERSITY DURING WORLD WAR TWO WHEN HE WAS INDUCTED INTO THE ARMED SERVICES. AFTER THE WAR, HE RETURNED TO THE UNIVERSITY WHERE HE GRADUATED. AND THEN HE TOOK UP FARMING AGAIN.

THE DEAL'S PLANT ABOUT EIGHTY HECTARES IN CORN, EIGHTY HECTARES IN GRAIN SORGHUM, AND ABOUT SIXTY HECTARES IN WHEAT. THEY DOUBLE CROP PART OF THE WHEAT WITH SOYBEANS. THIS MEANS THAT THEY HARVEST THE WHEAT AS EARLY AS THEY CAN IN LATE JUNE EACH SUMMER, AND THEN IMMEDIATELY PLANT THE SAME LAND IN SOYBEANS. AFTER THE SOYBEANS ARE HARVESTED IN THE FALL, THEY SEED THE LAND BACK TO WINTER WHEAT.

IN ADDITION TO THEIR GRAIN CROPS, THE DEALS KEEP SIXTY-ONE HEAD OF BEEF COWS. THE COWS CLEAN UP RESIDUE, SUCH AS CORN STALKS, AND THEY ALSO USE THE PASTURE ON THE ROUGHLAND THAT IS NOT SUITED TO CULTIVATE CROPS. GRAIN SORGHUM AND SOYBEAN STALKS ARE SAVED TO FEED THE COWS IN WINTER.

MISTER DEAL SAYS, THEY HIRE NO EXTRA HELP AT ALL. ALL THE WORK IS DONE BY HIM AND HIS WIFE. AND HE BOASTS THAT SHE IS A GOOD TRACTOR DRIVER. NOT EVERY FARM WIFE IN AMERICA DRIVES A TRACTOR, BUT MANY DO. AND THEY NEARLY ALL ARE CAPABLE OF DRIVING FARM TRUCKS. THE BIGGEST AMERICAN FARMS, OF COURSE, REQUIRE ADDITIONAL HIRED LABOR. BUT MOST FARM WORK IS DONE BY MACHINES -- NOT BY MANPOWER.

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JS/RTD